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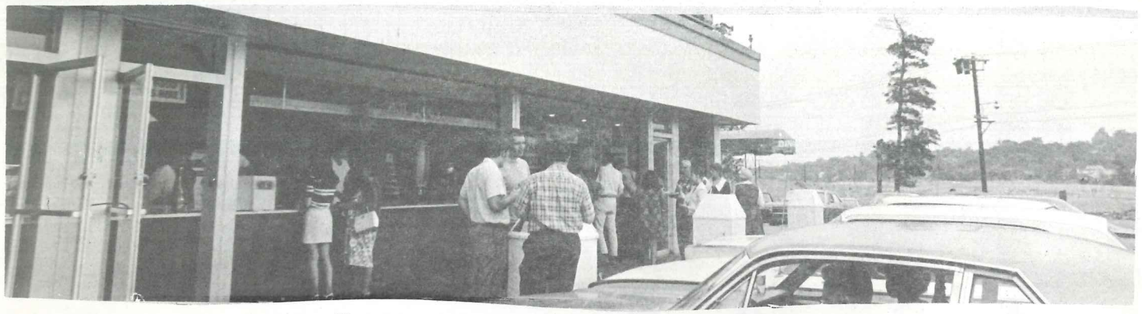
There is nothing more common
than to confound the terms of
the American Revolution with
those of the late American war.
The American war is over but
this is far from being the case
with the American revolution.
On the contrary, nothing but
the first act of the great drama
is closed.

Benjamin Rush, 1787

...the anniversary of a revolution.



FARMER'S ALMANAC

A NEW FEATURE: NEW HAVEN NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE.

by John Wilhelm

The long battle to save three popular Savin Rock restaurants from West Haven Redevelopment Agency bulldozers may end July 15. On that day, West Haveners will vote on a referendum to throw out the Redevelopment Agency's Savin Rock Project No. 2 plan and save Jimmie's, Phyllis', and Turk's.

These three seafood and hot dog restaurants are popular gathering and eating places for working people, and especially young people, from the entire New Haven area.

Richard F. Brennan, a leader of the fight to save the restaurants, told a West Haven senior citizens group June 12, "You are the people to whom these restaurants are a necessity. You and the middle and lower income groups have been served by them for the past 40 years.

"For example, a man and wife and two or three children may take a ride on a Sunday afternoon, and on the way home stop for a small lunch. They cannot afford to go to a Red Coach or Vallie's or go into any other restaurant for a large dinner costing $15 to $20, but they can stop and pick up a hot dog or hamburg and soda for the entire family, and eat it in the car for $2 to $3. We believe this service should not be eliminated and the people deprived of this opportunity."

This fight began more than three years ago, when a petition demanding a referendum was circulated by the owners of the three restaurants and other West Haven taxpayers and signed by 3556 voters. West Haven City Clerk John Perrone declared many of the signatures invalid on various technicalities. In May of this year Court of Common Pleas Judge Kenneth Zarrilli finally ruled that Perrone had acted illegally and that the petitions were good.

This means that West Haveners will go to the polls July 15. A "Yes" vote will throw out the Redevelopment Agency's plan for the entire project, and save the restaurants. Twenty per cent, or about 5200, of the city's 26,000 registered voters must vote for the referendum to be binding.

The effects could be enormous if the referendum wins. The Redevelopment Agency spent between $7 and $9 million buying and clearing most of the land in Project No. 2 before the legal action was decided — a fact which astonished Superior Court Judge Joseph Klau. That expense of mainly Federal money may have been completely illegal. Property owners whose land was condemned in the area might also be able to sue for triple damages if the referendum wins.

Brennan and many other West Haveners are bitter about the entire redevelopment program. Brennan says about Project No. 1, the shore apartment development at the end of Campbell Avenue, "The apartments which were built are a disgrace and an eye-sore, which seems to be agreed by everyone. They have been described as 'chicken coops'."

Brennan is an insurance and real estate man and former Democartic city tax assessor who twice ran for first selectman (mayor) of West Haven as in Independent, getting more than one-fifth of the vote both times. He finds it "really amazing that the Federal Government should allow itself to be used as a tool to drive people out of business." He says that the money spent in Project No. 2 has gone for "demolishing buildings, dispossessing people from their homes in which they have resided for many years and driving businessesout without relocating one, although the original concept of redevelopment was to relocate business in the area".

Countless small businessmen and residents of New Haven could tell West Haveners that this is nothing new. Commercial redevelopment in downtown New Haven has used the dollars we all pay in Federal taxes to drive out small business and help large chains and corporations like Macy's, and the big national and international real estate companies which now own much of the "new" downtown. Many other small businesses and homes have been ruined by Interstate 91, the extension of Route 34 down Legion Avenue, and other "renewal" projects.

Of course, the owners of Jimmies, Phyllis', and Turk's have good reason to fight being closed. They are very profitable businesses: last year Jimmie's grossed almost $1.2 million, Phyllis' about $800,000, and Turk's $400,000.

Stephen Iovanna, who owns Phyllis', spent over $400,000 remodelling his place in 1969, and Salvatore Gagliardi offered in 1964 to spend more than $350,000 fixing up Jimmie's. The businessmen have proposed all sorts of plans to rebuild the parking lots to cut down on trash and dangerous traffic, but all have been rejected by the city.

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Last spring a top Yale University official said privately that he had "never heard of a New Haven alderman until this year." For 16 years Yale has gotten what it needs from New Haven — things like highways and land for expansion — by dealing secretly with Mayor Richard C. Lee. The Mayor went to City Hall from his job at the Yale News Bureau, and he has been a close personal friend of Yale President Kingman Brewster and former President A. Whitney Griswold.

Because of its special relationship with Lee, Yale is not used to dealing directly with the people of New Haven or even their closest elected officials,

the aldermen. During the last year black people have tried to force Yale — which has an endowment of close to $600 million — to help with their problems. The University responded by giving about $100,000 to the Black Coalition, hoping that the money would pacify its angry black neighbors.

Now the University is discovering that there are also a lot of white people angry about its arrogant attitude toward New Haven. The first issue of this column (AIM Newsletter, May 15, 1969) discussed one of the major problems Yale has helped create in the city: high property tax rates. $95.2 million worth of Yale's property — 11 per cent of the assessed value of all property in New Haven — is tax exempt. This exemption saves Yale over $5 million every year in city taxes.

On June 2, after almost two years of political wrangling, the Board of Aldermen passed a bill that could be very important for hard-pressed city taxpayers. The bill says that a tax-exempt institution must get approval from the aldermen before it can buy any more property and put it on the tax-exempt list. The new law is aimed mainly at Yale and at Yale-New Haven Hospital (which Yale controls), but it will also effect smaller tax-exempt institutions like St. Raphael's Hospital.

The bill says that "certain types of educational and health institutions are of such size and/or impact that their future development must be guided in order to protect the general welfare of the City of New Haven and its citizens." From now on, "an institution may establish institutional development or use on any lot or in any building or other structure only by Application to the Board of Aldermen..."

One of the guidelines the aldermen are to use in deciding on new tax-exempt property is "the extent to which the proposed development will remove existing uses of land and the impact of such removal upon the surrounding area and the City at large." This is aimed at controlling the amount of property Yale removes from the city's tax lists. Every time another piece of property becomes tax exempt, of course, taxes must go up for ordinary taxpayers.

This bill, which passed the Board of Alderman by a 22-2 vote with Alderman Charles Gill abstaining, certainly won't solve the city's financial mess. The biggest problem remains: the city gets its money mainly from property taxes, which are totally unfair because all property owners are taxed at the same rate no matter how rich or poor they are. Tenants suffer too, because landlords pass on tax increases in the form of higher rents.

But the bill could help. It is ridiculous that the city's richest corporation, Yale, can tear down homes and businesses without being controlled in any way, and raise everyone's tax burden in the process.

Wiggin and Dana, the high-priced local law firm for both Yale and Yale-New Haven Hospital, has already begun to challenge this new ordinance in New Haven's Court of Common Pleas. If it survives that test, it will at least provide a chance for proposed Yale expansion to be discussed in public. If the people of the city can put enough pressure on the aldermen, the new law might even stop Yale from tearing down parts of New Haven whenever it feels like it.

Alderman William Muehl, who is a professor at the Yale Divinity School, said in voting against this bill that "I do not need to appear before this honorable board in order to open a rubber manufacturing plant, a slaughterhouse, or an iron foundry. But if I wish to open or expand two of the most useful forms of community enterprise, a college or a hospital, I must submit myself to an extraordinary process..."

But most aldermen agreed that Yale and other tax-exempt institutions should be answerable to the city's elected officials. Maybe they should take a hint from Muehl and try to control industry, too.

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Alderman David Greenberg said, in supporting the new city ordinance on tax-exempt institutions, that an example of Yale expansion the Board of Aldermen could look into is the Mellon Art Gallery, proposed for the block bounded by Chapel, High, Crown, and York streets (see **AIM Newsletter**, May 1, 1969). This project will help destroy one of liveliest small business areas, as well as many apartments. Some of the stores on Chapel Street have already vacated.

Yale is now getting worried about a new problem: the subculture beginning to grow on Chapel Street among Yale students and young people from the city.

Yale thinks its main job is to train the men who will run America from the top jobs in big business, government, and universities. The heavy stone walls and moats and locked iron gates of Yale buildings are no accident: one of the ways the University miseducates its students is by insulating them from the real problems of average Americans.

The growth of an area where Yalies could mix with ordinary New Haveners on equal terms would disturb Yale's brand of education. This has started to happen on Chapel Street, where three vacated storefronts have been occupied by student groups interested in the city: Architects Resistance, the Black Workshop of architecture and city planning students, and a mainly undergraduate group called the Center for Educational Innovation.

The University is trying to throw these groups out. George Langdon, Yale's Assistant Provost, said in a June 12 letter to the Center for Educational Innovation that they must clear out by July 1: "Planning for the use of the Mellon block is now proceeding at an accelerated pace, and because demolition

of existing structures is planned for in the not too distant future, I have not approved any requests for space in the part of the block scheduled for use by the Mellon Building during the last several months."

It is not true that demolition of these buildings is scheduled very soon. Businessmen on the block have been told they have until spring 1970 to vacate. Yale simply wants these groups out, because it fears the growth of a relationship between its students and city people that it cannot control.

The huge fire on June 14 which gutted part of Yale's Art and Architecture Building was lucky in at least one way for Yale: it gives the University a more reasonable-sounding excuse for throwing these student groups off Chapel Street. Yale now claims it needs the space for art and architecture classes next year.

Yale's reaction is much like that of the University of California at Berkeley, which in May threw the people of the town out of a "People's Park" they had built on University property. Police and National Guardsmen were called in to enforce that eviction, and one person died and hundreds were wounded in the days that followed.

On Chapel Street, some of the students say they too will resist their eviction. That might help them understand how townspeople feel when Yale tears down part of the city.

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Yale is beginning to get nervous about all this uproar from the aldermen, from ordinary New Haveners, and from students. Early this month the University released the first two of what probably will be a barrage of public statements Yale hopes will make people happy with its role in New Haven.

The first statement said that Yale may build a commercial, tax-producing building at 33 Whitney Avenue, where it has an option to buy the 200-year-old colonial house that now contains the Tinker Shoppe.

According to a New Haven Register **story June 4, a Yale spokesman said the University is very concerned about taking taxable properties off the tax lists. The spokesman said the office building would be built in the spirit of making a contribution to downtown business life, and that it could serve businesses forced to relocate by Yale expansion in other parts of the city.**

The University's second public-relations attempt was an announcement by Jules D. Prown, director of the Paul Mellon Center for British Arts and British Studies, that he is recommending that famous architect Louis I. Kahn design the Mellon Art Gallery. Kahn is the architect who has had a rough time dealing with the neighborhood objections to his proposed urban renewal project in the Hill.

Prown's announcement was full of vague promises that the Mellon Gallery would be a valuable addition to the city's life. According to a New Haven Register **story by Robert Kilpatrick, Prown said the gallery would be a "beautiful and livable and vital urban space," and it would be "concerned with people and with life."**

Prown did not say how a $10 million art gallery full of dead British culture would help the people of New Haven with their urgent and important problems.

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Meanwhile, Yale goes on buying up the city. In June the University bought the rooming house and the large lot behind it at 1195 Chapel Street, between Park and Howe Streets. It already owned two adjoining houses around the corner on Park.

The State Public Utilities Commission also approved the sale by the Penn Central Railroad to Yale of two blocks of the Canal railroad line, between Temple and Prospect streets, on the condition that Yale build in the air rights over the line only and keep the line itself open for possible future mass transportation. Homeowners on Mansfield Street above the Yale hockey rink also say that Yale is trying to buy their properties.

IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII

The 1969 edition of the Connecticut state legislature is bringing nothing but financial disaster for working people in the state, and for people forced to live on inadequate welfare and retirement budgets.

The special session which began June 23 seemed headed, as this went to press, toward some compromise between two bad proposals for state taxes: a five per cent sales tax, extended to cover many things exempted from the present 3½ per cent sales tax, or a six per cent sales tax covering most of the same things now covered.

Like the property tax in cities, the sales tax is a terrible way to raise money because everyone pays at the same rate no matter how much money they have. Yet the people in Hartford plan to raise about half the state budget from a sales tax.

During the Legislature's regular session State Senator Edward Marcus of New Haven proposed a tax to be paid by employers equal to one per cent of their total payroll. Big businessmen and bankers around Connecticut were outraged at this attempt to make them pay a decent share of the state's costs.

Full-page ads were published in most Connecticut newspapers in May by something called "The Citizens Committee to Preserve Jobs," paid for by big business in the state. The version of the ad in the New Haven Register **was headlined "An Employers Payroll Tax Means Fewer Jobs, Higher Prices in Connecticut." It contained this threat from a vice president of the Winchester Group of Olin-Mathieson Chemical Corporation in New Haven:**

"The proposed payroll tax would mean an increase of approximately 30 per cent of the amount of taxes Olin now pays in Connecticut. Presently we have plans on the drawing boards for expansion within the state. These plans and undoubtedly the plans of many other corporations might well have to be altered to account for this tax if enacted. Clearly, Connecticut cannot expect to receive the same kind of corporate attention it has had in the past if it chooses to become the only state in the country with this type of levy."

The message from the big corporations came through loud and clear: if Connecticut tries to make us pay more of our share of state expenses, we'll build our new plants elsewhere and Connecticut workers can starve. The payroll tax idea was dropped.

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Two more examples of the way influence works in the state legislature:

1) New Haven Representative Robert Oliver introduced a bill requiring warnings on cans of dangerous lead-based paints. This would have been a small but helpful contribution toward reducing the criminally high rate of lead poisoning in New Haven and other cities.

The bill never got out of the State Senate's Finance Committee, whose chairman, Sen. William J. Verriker of Waterbury, owns one of Connecticut's largest paint supply companies.

2) The Roads and Bridges Committee refused to report out any of the various bills opposing the extension of Route 34, down Legion Avenue in New Haven (see **AIM Newsletter,** April 1, 1969). The committee also issued a statement saying that the governor's budget didn't have enough highway-building money in it.

The Senate chairman of the Roads and Bridges Committee, State Sen. Paul Amenta of New Britain, works for a large company which sells heavy construction equipment, including machines used in building — you guessed it — highways.

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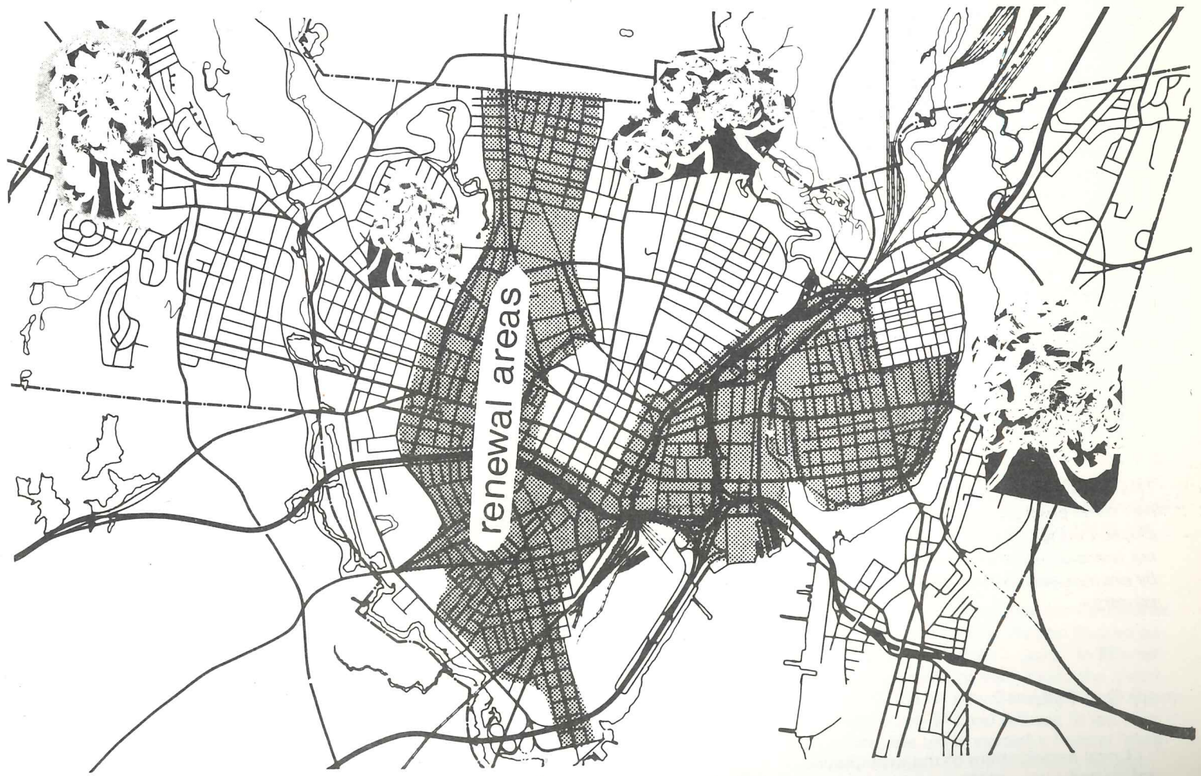
The legislature did manage to do a few things that will help in small ways. Among them:

— Made it legal starting October 1 for women to sit (but still not stand!) at bars.

— Killed a bill raising the number of signatures needed for "minor" political parties to get on the ballot from one-half of one per cent of the number of votes cast for the office in the previous election to two per cent.

— Agreed to lower the voting age to 18 if the state's voters approve it in a 1970 referendum.

— Reduced the "crime" of possession of or use of marijuana from a felony to a misdemeanor.



The New Haven Redevelopment Agency announced in May that it is planting 324 trees in the city this spring. Trees make the city a more livable and pleasant place, of course. But who benefits most from this "Redevelopment" activity? As this map shows, the trees are going into the most pleasant middle class and upper middle class areas. No poor neighborhood gets any, and the closest they come to working people is the East Grand Avenue-Russell Street area in Fair Haven Heights.

AND OUT – Home Relief demonstrators and police came to blows at a demonstration held in front of the Department of Public Welfare Building in New York City, May 26th. Above is a tug-of-war between police and demonstrators with the added gentle touch of a policeman's billie which pronounced finis to this encounter.–May 26th, 1934–Acme.

This clash arose when demonstrators determined to see relief heads against a police prohibition. Cause of dispersing the gathering was the police refusal to admit them to the relief offices. Some resistance was shown by the crowd, which the police attacked with ferocity.–Editor.

The Unemployed Join in Action

This is the second installment of a three-part series on organizations of the unemployed during the 1930's. The article in our last issue dealt with mass actions taken by unemployed workers all across the country.

by Gail Falk

Local organizations of the unemployed got started in the 1930's in almost as many ways as there were neighborhoods and leaders of the unemployed.

Evictions were one reason people got together. Many of the jobless had their mortgages foreclosed when they could no longer afford to make payments on their homes; people in the cities were evicted from their apartments when they didn't pay the rent.

Neighbors who watched a friend's possessions all moved out of a house and onto the street, who saw the sheriff come and lock the house shut, and who saw the family left homeless with nowhere to go, got angry. Men in the neighborhood formed defense teams that would follow along after the sheriff's men, tear the lock off the house, and move the furniture back in.

Avenging the Evicted

Here is a report that appeared in the newsletter of the Lehigh County Unemployment League about an afternoon's activity of one such group in Allentown, Pennsylvania:

"An infuriated crowd of Unemployed League members twice this afternoon, within the period of an hour, smashed attempted evictions....A messenger came running into the Unemployed League Headquarters: 'A widow is being evicted.' In 10 seconds scores of husky Leaguers were tearing down Hamilton St....

In two minutes they ran into and around the home where the eviction was taking place – Mrs. K____ was cowering in a corner, almost fainting with fright, tears streaming down her wrinkled old face, as the brutal thugs tossed her last few possessions out and started to move them off in a truck....League members pressed the thugs to the wall....Fists were raised.... Willing hands took the furniture from the truck and carried it back into the house....

Half an hour later, while the office staff had scarcely time to catch its breath, another messenger burst in: 'Come quick, the thugs are back and have smashed the old lady's door!' Once more the League men sped to the scene. 'Eviction on Chestnut Street,' they cried to curious spectators as they ran down the streets and alleys....

In spite of numerous police on the scene, League members ran into the house and drove the sniveling thugs into the street. The crowd booed lustily. As they saw the splintered door their anger rose. 'Where are the rats that did this?' they shouted. The thugs were pointed out, cowering behind the coat-tails of the cops. More police cars drew up as the crowd strained to get at the eviction gang....The truck drivers climbed into the van and prepared to move away. But they had a hard time getting started as water had accidentally gotten into their gas tank."

Not all eviction defenses ended as successfully as this one. Commonly, the police arrested or beat the resisters. In Chicago, during the summer of 1931, three black men were killed attempting to defend their neighbors from eviction. In time, unemployed groups turned more and more to demands on the relief office to pay rent bills to prevent housing emergencies.

Self-help in Seattle

Another kind of neighborhood effort started with self-help. The most successful self-help organization started in Seattle, with encouragement from former Wobbly leaders. The self-help organization there – which came to be known as the Republic of the Penniless – attracted people who were very proud and didn't want to accept charity if they could possibly help it. A writer in Seattle describes most of the members of the Republic of the Penniless as "staunch standpatters, established householders, flagwavers, who still think of Sam as another benevolent uncle."

The object of the Republic of the Penniless was to use the energies of unemployed men to get needed supplies. With trucks and gas donated by city leaders, teams of men went out into the hills and cut timber, which they supplied to families without heat.

Some men were sent to scavenge the docks for unsold fish. Sewing rooms, shoe repair shops, and canning and preserving kitchens were set up. Crews went out across the mountains to dig potatoes which farmers had left in the ground for lack of a cash market. Teams of workers made improvements and repaired houses in exchange for rent to keep people from being evicted. During a single month – May, 1932 – 6,000 unemployed men and women worked 104,000 hours for the Republic of the Penniless.

In time, however, feeding, clothing and housing thousands of unemployed urban workers without outside resources became about as hard as squeezing milk from a rock, and the proud Seattle citizens turned their energies to demanding that the city assume its responsibilities. The Republic of the Penniless had set up such a thorough distribution system that when the city appropriated $½ million for relief, they arranged for the supplies to be distributed through the warehouses run by the jobless.

This arrangement gave the organization of the unemployed in Seattle a great deal of power, which they used to get candidates they had endorsed elected. Unfortunately, the man the supported for mayor– named Dore – turned against the poor when he got into office. He took control of the relief machinery out of the hands of the poor and earned the nickname, "Revolving Dore."

A Revolutionary Cause?

A lot of the organizing around the country was done by members of radical or revolutionary political parties.

The Communist Party was the first to see the importance of organizing unemployed workers, and they set up the first national organization of the unemployed – the Unemployed Council, which had offices in 36 states as of 1933. Communists did most of the organizing for some of the early mass demonstrations, and they encouraged the unemployed to form self-defense units (for use as pickets during strikes, to defend demonstrators against brutality, and to halt evictions).

The Communists organized men on bread lines and in flop houses, in groups loitering around factory gates hoping for a job, and in the waiting rooms of relief offices. Some of the groups they organized were closely tied to local cells, while other unemployed councils were strong, independent groups. The Communists thought that employed and unemployed workers should join into one big union – the Trade Union Unity League – since they had the same goals and the same enemies, and they urged workers to demand a national program of unemployment insurance.

Members of the Socialist Party worked with other liberals to form less militant groups of the unemployed. One of the most influential Socialist groups was the Chicago Workers Committee on Unemployment. This group attracted a lot of young professionals and college graduates, who often had as much trouble finding work during the Depression as blue collar workers.

The Socialist groups tended to use conferences and negotiations, rather than physical actions, to forward their goals. They sponsored big hearings to call attention to the problems of the poor, and the Chicago Committee published a newspaper called the **New Frontier.**

The Grass Roots Approach

A. J. Muste's Conference for Progressive Labor Action, which merged with the Trotskyites in the mid-1930's, organized Unemployed Citizens Leagues and Unemployed Leagues. They were strongest in the West and in the coal regions of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, and they were often based in settled neighborhoods of working class people. The Unemployed Citizens Leagues concentrated on self-help; the Seattle group was one of them. The Allentown group was one of the Unemployed Leagues and typical of this group, which favored direct action.

The Conference for Progressive Labor Action emphasized the importance of developing grass-roots leadership and independent local groups. Louis Budenz, one of its main organizers, wrote, "Responsibility should be placed upon those local active men and upon the local leagues to carry on through their own initiative, on the basis of their own situation and of what other leagues have done....The rank and file must know that the actions taken, whether industrial or political, are their own actions and if any united labor political effort arises that it is their own party.

"Organizers are called for by these developments who can move rapidly, 'live on the country' and obtain their lodgings from fellow-workers and friends of the cause."

Unity with Unions

Like the Communists, the Conference for Progressive Labor Action favored cooperation with labor unions. In Minneapolis unemployed men joined the picket lines of the striking General Drivers (Teamsters) Local 544 and refused to scab. In return, the union started a Federal Workers' Section for the unemployed, and lent its influence to efforts for relief reform.

When 1,900 auto workers went on strike against the Electric Auto-Lite Com-

pany in Toledo, they were enjoined from picketing by a local judge. Members of the Lucas County Unemployed League supported the strikers by picketing the plant in violation of the judge's order. The picketing continued in spite of arrests. Eventually, the League gathered more than 10,000 demonstrators, who fought National Guardsmen in violent street fighting and destroyed much of the factory.

A general strike, organized by both union and unemployed leaders, and joined by 83 local unions, led to favorable contracts and recognition for the auto workers and several other Toledo unions.

These instances of cooperation between labor unions and the unemployed were unusual, however. Leaders of the unemployed wanted to unite with the labor unions, which were growing strong in the 1930's, because they realized the same system and the same bosses that fired workers and left them jobless also oppressed workers on the job.

"The Year's At the Spring . . . All's Right With the World"

However, leaders of most labor unions did not act very interested in the unemployed, even though they gave lip-service agreement to the need for unity. Most unions dropped members who were out of work and couldn't pay their dues. Plans for affiliation between the CIO and unemployed organizations were talked about for a long time but not carried through.

When the federal government started to hire unemployed people on public works projects, through the Works Projects Administration (WPA), the labor unions showed interest in organizing these people. Strikes on WPA projects succeeded in getting union hourly rates accepted. But instead of cooperating on these programs, the unions and unemployed groups often became rivals for the loyalty of the federal workers.

Goals and Grievances

Just about all the unemployed groups had long-range goals, but they held onto their members and gained new supporters by the day to day work of handling members' grievances against the local relief office. The kinds of grievances people on relief had in the 1930's were very much like the complaints people on welfare have today only more so, because the relief offices were new and hastily set up.

The main grievance was that there wasn't enough — enough rent money, enough food, enough clothing. Sometimes individuals complained that they had been cut off relief unfairly or that they had been turned down when they deserved to be accepted.

Unemployed people had many complaints about the attitude of the relief workers. Here, for instance, is a quote from the newsletter of an Unemployed Council in Port Angeles, Washington:

" 'Home Visitors' or snoopers are only relief workers on a cash basis. They are picked for their ability as snoopers and stool pigeons only . They ask you so damn many questions that there is nothing personal left to you anyway."

A common way for the unemployed groups to handle complaints was to elect a grievance committee with a grievance chairman. The grievance committee would collect complaints, often by spending the day down at the relief office and talking with people who were dissatisfied.

In areas with an active grievance committee, procedures for regular meetings with relief officials developed. A survey of New York City's 44 relief offices in 1936 showed that 39 of them met delegations of recipients at least twice a week.

Members of the grievance committee had to know the relief rules well so they could sift out the valid complaints and so they could argue effectively. Many of the staff of the relief offices were sympathetic to the recipient groups and were glad to help the grievance committees get the information they needed. Many of the workers had recently been on relief themselves; some were members of the Communist Party.

The New York relief workers developed such an efficient system for getting new regulations to the grievance committees that the local grievance chairman often had word of a new ruling before the local relief director knew of it. Sympathetic workers in the local office could also supply the grievance committees with the names of individuals whose applications had been turned down so the grievance committee could contact these people and offer to take their cases.

Mass Actions

When the grievance committees couldn't get satisfaction through discussions, they would bring the problem back to the group and the group would plan a mass action. Mass actions were also used to demand a change in the rules.

The list of mass actions the unemployed organizations sometimes used includes nearly all the techniques that protesters use today, and a few more.

Pickets and leaflets were common sights outside relief offices. Relief offices generally had rules against leafleting inside, but groups often found ways to smuggle their flyers into the building and to circulate them among the workers and in the waiting rooms.

When these got no results the group might try an inside action. One effective method was to have members come into the office gradually, as if they were going to make individual complaints, until a large group was suddenly there. Then, at a signal from the leader, a speaker would start a mass meeting, or the group would begin to shout and stamp and demand to see the director.

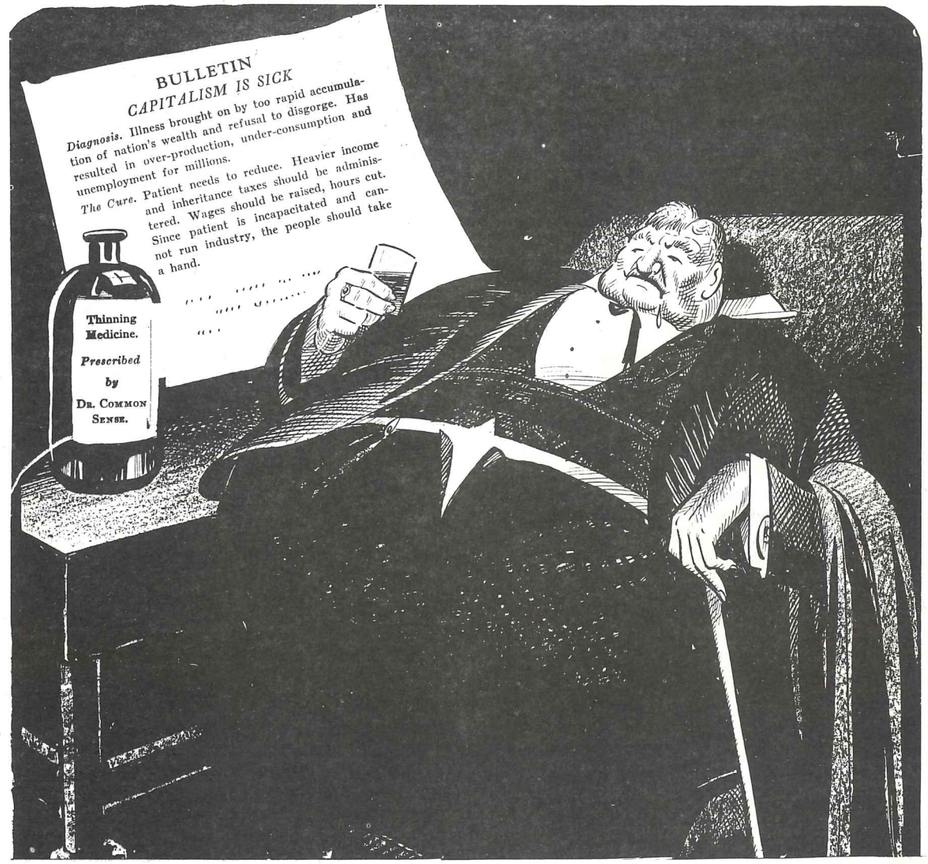
The groups learned always to send a delegation in to see the director, not an individual, because an individual could too easily be duped or bought off.

If the group still got no satisfaction, and if the demands were serious enough, they might try a sit-in — that is, refuse to leave until the demands were met or the group was arrested. In Brooklyn, in 1936, 200 recipients sat in at a relief office for three days and three nights.

Some of the groups got important help from friendly relief workers in planning these actions. The relief workers might provide a map showing window exits, guard posts, telephones, the director's office; or they might advise about the best time of day to start the action or the demands most likely to get a positive response.

Official Response

The relief administrations fought back against the pressure groups in direct and


BULLETIN
CAPITALISM IS SICK
Diagnosis. Illness brought on by too rapid accumulation of nation's wealth and refusal to disgorge. Has resulted in over-production, under-consumption and unemployment for millions.
The Cure. Patient needs to reduce. Heavier income and inheritance taxes should be administered. Wages should be raised, hours cut. Since patient is incapacitated and cannot run industry, the people should take a hand.
Thinning Medicine.
Prescribed by
Dr. Common Sense.

indirect ways. Police guards became a regular sight at relief offices around the country. A call to the police was usually the first step of a nervous local director confronted with a group of angry recipients.

On the whole, the police were just as ruthless in dealing with these indoor demonstrations as they had been toward the mass marches. In downtown Brooklyn several women were so terrified by police who arrived to break up their demonstration that they jumped out the window of the relief office, which was several stories high.

Some cities set up central grievance offices to handle all complaints as an indirect way of fighting the pressure groups. One of the first such offices was developed in Chicago after a series of bloody demonstrations at neighborhood offices. The local offices were instructed not to handle any more grievances, and to send anyone with a complaint to the central office.

Relief workers claimed, in defense of this system, that it was more efficient, and that it gave an impartial hearing to all complaints instead of favoring those backed up by powerful groups. But the effect of these central grievance bureaus was to weaken seriously the local organizations, whose main strength had been their ability to mount pressure against the local office.

Some of the militant organizations tried to boycott the central grievance offices. But their membership fell off drastically when they did that, since there was no other way for complaints to be handled.

In spite of these problems, the pressure groups were undeniably effective in getting more benefits for their members. A study of the complaints made in five district offices in New York City during 1936 showed that more than half the requests were granted.

Besides the grievance work they did, the organizations of the unemployed played an important role by teaching poor people about their rights to relief and in giving them courage to stand up for their rights. The groups kept up the spirit of men who were out of work, and helped turn poor people's anger against the political system instead of against themselves and their neighbors. The threat of pressure also kept relief workers on their toes, and made relief administrators hesitant to come down hard with repressive measures.

But like welfare rights groups today, the effectiveness of the unemployed organizations on a local level was limited by the amount of money in the relief director's budget. While pressure on the local office could do much to correct discrimination against individuals and to challenge relief office policy when it invaded the individual's privacy or dignity, pressure on a neighborhood level could not do much to increase payments for all recipients. For this, changes on a state and a national level were needed.

This series will conclude in our next issue with a discussion of national coalitions of the unemployed, legislation passed, and the fate of organizations of the unemployed.

POLLUTION PERISCOPE

A Poor Man's Guide to the Mill River

by Tony Dominski

I can smell for miles and miles.....
(adapted from a popular song)

New Haven residents have been complaining about the Mill River for years and have even formed committees to take action. The most recent committee, connected with the Fair Haven Betterment Association, organized a Christmas Eve march to the Mill River. The marchers perfumed the Mill, and for a short time a pleasant odor floated over the river. But today, as it has for more than 20 years, the river smells like rotten eggs and worse.

Six months ago the AIM Pollution Periscope started to investigate the complaints about the Mill River and to find out why no action was being taken by the companies polluting the Mill or the governmental agenices responsible for overseeing the quality of our water resources. This article summarizes the results of our investigation.

Who Dumps What into the River?

The Mill River polluters function as a team in producing the unbelievably bad conditions along the river. They do such a good job that the AIM Pollution Periscope felt that some of the polluters deserved special recognition. We decided to give Pollution Periscope awards to those companies and governmental agencies showing the greatest willingness and ability to deliver consistent heavy doses of pollution to their customers.

The awards are as follows:

CATEGORY A (Best Public Relations)
This is a joint award to the *Federal Paper Company* and to *New Haven Board and Carton Company* for persuading the city to let them dump around 10 tons of wood fibers, glue, kaolinite and titanium oxide into the Mill every day. Their famous last words: "Sure we're good citizens employing many area residents. But don't make us clean up or we'll move."

CATEGORY B (Most Versatile)
Awarded to *United Illuminating* for a proven ability to deliver the most air pollution (after automobiles) and still provide thermal pollution to the Mill River to heat the whole fermenting mess.

CATEGORY C (Most Unhealthy)
Awarded to the *City Sewer System* for delivering daily 20 million gallons of inadequately treated sewage near the mouth of the Mill where the tide can carry it back up stream. Special mention to the East Street and City Point Sewer Plants for closing beaches and contaminating clams and oysters for miles.

Why the Smell?
(Where has all the oxygen gone?)

The smell, well known to people from State Street to the Quinnipiac, is not really rotten eggs but sulfur containing gases such as hydrogen sulfide. Sulfur gases are poisonous to human beings, but it is not known how dangerous the concentrations released at the Mill are. We do know that the concentrations are high enough to cause people to close their windows on hot summer nights. There have also been complaints of the gases contaminating food in restaurants.

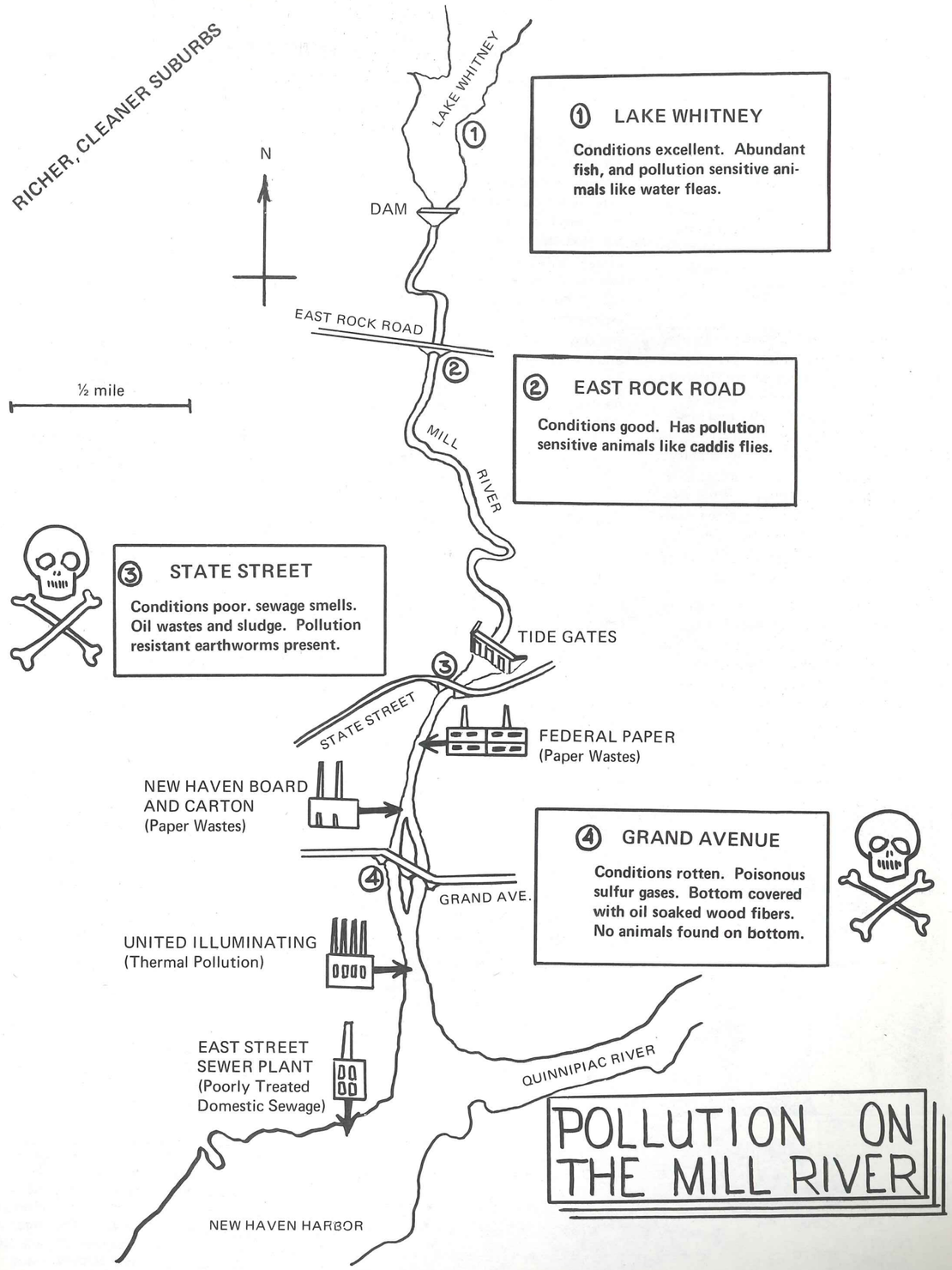
The sulfur gases are produced in the muck and paper fiber deposits on the river bottom by sulfur bacteria. These organisms can function only where there is very little or no oxygen, and thrive from State Street to the Harbor. The oxygen at the bottom of the Mill is used up by other bacteria and fungi in decomposing wood fibers and glue from the paper factories and sewage dumped practically raw into the harbor. It can be concluded that the paper mill and sewer plant wastes are the cause of the pungent odor.

Who is Getting Paid?

The people responsible for the pollution of the Mill River do not live near it. Why should they? They have higher incomes and can afford to live where they don't have to smell it. The management of United Illuminating, New Haven Board and Carton, and Federal Paper draw large salaries from the money made from their companies. If they do not pay for pollution control devices they can keep their profits at a higher level. So they get the money while city residents get the pollution.

As a previous AIM Newsletter article ("Spineless Pollution Laws", Feb. 1, '69) pointed out, the pollution laws are inadequate and very laxly enforced. A visit to Hartford and a look at the Connecticut State Water Resource Commission files on the Mill will reveal that Federal Paper and New Haven Board and Carton have been coddled by the law. They have been granted extension after extension on orders to clean up and after more than a decade have not cleaned up their discharges enough to return the river even close to a nonpolluted condition. Pollution laws are pro-business oriented at the expense of the common man. This gives us a clue as to exactly who is controlling the government and who is paying who.

In the state and local governments, there have been suggestions that companies should be granted tax incentives to clean up. This means that companies pay less taxes and ordinary people are burdened with regressive sales and property taxes, and income taxes — with plenty of loopholes for rich people who can well


RICHER, CLEANER SUBURBS
N
½ mile
LAKE WHITNEY
① LAKE WHITNEY
Conditions excellent. Abundant fish, and pollution sensitive animals like water fleas.
DAM
EAST ROCK ROAD
② EAST ROCK ROAD
Conditions good. Has pollution sensitive animals like caddis flies.
MILL RIVER
③ STATE STREET
Conditions poor. sewage smells. Oil wastes and sludge. Pollution resistant earthworms present.
TIDE GATES
STATE STREET
FEDERAL PAPER
(Paper Wastes)
NEW HAVEN BOARD AND CARTON
(Paper Wastes)
④ GRAND AVENUE
Conditions rotten. Poisonous sulfur gases. Bottom covered with oil soaked wood fibers. No animals found on bottom.
GRAND AVE.
UNITED ILLUMINATING
(Thermal Pollution)
EAST STREET SEWER PLANT
(Poorly Treated Domestic Sewage)
QUINNIPIAC RIVER
POLLUTION ON THE MILL RIVER
NEW HAVEN HARBOR

The poverty of the country is such that all the power and sway has got into the hands of the rich, who by extortious advantages, having the common people in their debt, have always curbed and oppressed them in all manner of ways.

Nathaniel Bacon, Rebel leader, 1676

No man is naturally entitled to a greater proportion of the earth than another . . . (Land) was made for the equal use of all.

Pennsylvania farmers, 1740's

Gentlemen may cry peace, peace – but there is no peace . . . What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the prices of chains and slavery?

Patrick Henry, 1775

If particular care and attention are not paid to the ladies we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound to obey any laws in which we have no voice or representation.

Abigail Adams to husband, John, 1776

If our people fight one tribe at a time, all will be killed. They can cut off our fingers one by one, but if we join together we will make a powerful fist.

Little Turtle, Master General of the Miami Indians, 1791

Whatever the apparent cause of any riots may be, the real one is always want of happiness. It shows that something is wrong in the system of government that injures the felicity by which society is to be preserved.

Thomas Paine, 1792

I have nothing more to offer than what George Washington would have had to offer had he been taken by the British officers and put to trial by them. I have ventured my life in endeavoring to obtain the freedom of my countrymen. I know that you have pre-determined to shed my blood. Why then all this mockery of a trial?

Slave during Gabriel's Revolt, 1800

quotes from *Revolutionary Quotations from the Thoughts of Uncle Sam*, 1969

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